GOOD ADVICE

TO THE

Church of *ENGLAND*, Roman Catholick,

and Protestant Dissenter.

In which it is endeavoured to be made appear

that it is their

DUTY, PRINCIPLES & INTEREST,

To Abolish the

PENAL LAWS & TESTS.

Beati Pacifici.

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LONDON,

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THE PREFACE.

Reader,

NO matter who, *but* what; *and yet if thou wouldst know the Author, he is an* English-Man, *and therefore obliged to this Country, and the Laws that made him free.*

That single Consideration were enough to command this Undertaking; for 'tis to perswade his Country Men to be delivered of the greatest Yoke a Nation can well Suffer under; Penal Laws for Religion, *I mean. And now thou hast, both the* who, *and* what; *If thou art* Wise *and* Good, *thou art above my Epethites, and more my Flatteries: If not, I am in the Right to let 'um alone.* Read, Think *and* Judge. *Liberty,* English *and* Christian, *is all that is sought in the ensuing Discourse.*

Adieu.

Good

GOOD ADVICE, &c.

PART I.

I Must own, it is my Aversion at this time, to meddle with Publick Matters, and yet my Duty to the Publick will not let me be silent. They that move by Principles must not regard *Times* nor *Factions*, but what is *just*, and what is *honourable*; and that no Man ought to scruple, nor no Time nor Interest to contest.

The single Question I go upon, and which does imediately concern & exercise the Minds of the thinking as well as talking men of this Kingdom, is, *whether it be fit to repeal the Penal Laws and Tests, in matters of Religion or not.* I take the affirmative of the Question, and humbly submit my Reasons to every reasonable Conscience. I say reasonable, because That which knows not its own Duty, Principles and Interest, is not so, and That which is not willing to do to others as it would be done by, less deserves to be thought so.

Now there are three sorts of People that will find themselves concerned in this Question; *the Church of England*, *the Roman Catholick*, and *the Protestant Dissenter*, and these make up the whole Body of the Kingdom; If it appear to be their Duty, Principles and Interest, the Question is gain'd, and no body is left to complain; and if I am mistaken, it is with so great an inclination to serve them all, that their good nature cannot but plead my Excuse, especially when they consider I am neither mov'd by Hopes nor Fears, Private Loss or Gain being farther from my thought, then I hope they are from a good Understanding.

I say, *first*, then it is the *Duty* of all of them, because they all profess that Religion which makes it their common duty to do it; *Christianity*, I mean: For no Christian ought to deprive any man of his native Right for matters of Faith and Worship towards God, in the way that he thinks most agreeable to the Will of God; because it is necessary to a Christian to believe that Faith is the Gift of God alone, and that He only is Lord of Conscience, and is able truly to enlighten, perswade and establish it; and consequently that prejudicing Men in their Persons or Estates, or depriving them of any Station in the Government, they might otherwise, in their turn, be capable to serve the Publick in, is contrary to the tenderness & equity of that Religion; which will yet further appear, if we consider that Christianity is the sole Religion of the World, that is built on the Principles of Love; which brought with it the greatest Evidences of Truth. Equally convincing our Understandings with its *Light*, and bearing down our Senses with its *Miracles*: Which silenc'd the Oracles of the Heathens by the Divine Power present with it, and vanquisht their Hearts, that had left nothing else to conquer, leading Kings and Emperors with their Courts and Armies in triumph after the despised *Cross* of him, who was the holy and blessed Author of it.

It was he that laid not his Religion in worldly Empire, nor used the methods of worldly Princes to propagate it; as it came from Heaven, so that only should have the Honor of protecting & promoting it. His whole business to Mankind, from first to last, was *Love*. 'Twas first Love in his Father to send him (as St. *John* teaches)

God so loved the World that he sent his Son, &c. It was love in Jesus Christ to come on that Arrand; that he, *who thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, should take the form of a Servant to adopt us Children, and make himself of no Reputation with the World, that he might make us of Reputation with God his Father.*

And he did not only come in much Love, but preach't it and prest it both to Friends and Foes; *Love one another, Love Enemies, do good to them that hate you, forgive them that trespass against you; what you would that other men should do unto you, do that unto them; by these things shall all Men know you are my Disciples; for I came not to destroy Mens Lives,* no, not for Religion it self; *for my Kingdom,* Power, Force, Weapons, and Victory *are not of this World.* In all this *Love* prevails. It was his great, his new, his last Commandment; of all his Disciples, the most persued by his beloved One, that in his Bosom had learn'd his Heart, as his Divine Doctrine of Love in his Epistle tells us.

As he liv'd in Love, so he died in Love, with us, and for us, and that *while we were rebellious too*; ay, he pray'd and dy'd for them who put him to Death, *shewing us* (says St. *Peter*) *an Example that we also should follow his Steps.* And what are they? doubtless the Steps of Love, the Path he trod: To do good to Mankind, Enemies as well as Friends, that we may be like our heavenly Father, *that causes his Sun to shine, and his Rain to fall upon the just and unjust.* This must be the Apostles meaning, for the rest of his Passion was Inimitable.

Now if this be *the Doctrine of Christ, the Nature of Christianity, the Practice of the Primitive Church,* that, like *Adam,* was created in *full Strength, Beauty and Wisdom,* and so an Example to succeeding Ages of Religion, and to which we so often refer as our Original; with what Pretence to a Christian Conscience can any one stickle to keep *Imprisoning, Banishing, Impoverishing, Hanging and Quartering Laws* on foot for Religion sake, but especially against such as are by Creed Professors of Christianity as well as themselves.

I know the Case is put hard by those that have the Laws on their side, *We do this to save our selves*; but an harder Case than Christs can never be put, whose Answer in his, ought to resolve theirs fully.

Christ is sent by his Father for the Salvation of the World: He introduces and proves his Mission by Miracles, and the great Authority of his Word and Doctrine; His Followers fully satisfied who he was, whence he came, what he taught, and how eminently confirm'd, grew impatient at Contradiction; they could not bear the least Dissent; for when some of the *Samaritans* refused to entertain their Lord, because they thought he was going for *Jerusalem,* the place of their greatest aversion; these Disciples were for having but the Word from his Mouth, and they would, in imitation of *Elijah, have called for Fire from Heaven to have destroy'd them. But he turned and rebuked them, and said, ye know not what* manner of Spirit *ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to* destroy *Mens Lives, but to* save *them.* This Answer is to purpose, and for all times, to be sure Christian ones; and the higher the Pretensions of any Party are to Christianity, the more inexcusable if they practice the contrary. Would not Christ then hurt them that refused him, and can we hurt our Neighbours for not receiving us? He condemned that Spirit in his Disciples, and shall we uphold the same Spirit, and that by Law too, which he condemned by his Gospel? This is *killing for Gods sake,* expressly charg'd by Christ with Impiety. *They shall think,* says he to his Disciples, *they do God good service to kill you*; who should think so? why *the Christian Persecutors.* Is it their property to do so? yes, what shall one think then of those Christians that profess it.

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The *Jews* were grievously punished of God, for that abomination of Sacrificing their Children to *Moloch*, but these Laws, though they change the Object, they have not lessen'd the Sin; *for they offer up Man, Woman and Child*, and though they say 'tis to *God*, no matter for that, since it makes their Case worse, for 'tis to imagine that so good, so just, so sensible, so merciful a Beeing can take pleasure in so much Cruelty. Well, *but if we must not knock Folks on the Head, what must we do with them?* Take an Answer at the Mouth of Truth and Wisdom. *Let the Tares and Wheat grow together till the Harvest*; whats that? he tells you, *'tis the end of the World*; so that whatever the Church of *England* is, 'tis certain Christ is for a Toleration, and his Doctrine is always in Fashion; what he was, he is, and will be; he went not by Reasons of State, or Customs of Countries; his Judgment was better built, who came to give Law, and not to receive it, and 'tis a *Light* and *Rule* to all times: *And He that loves Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or House, or Land better than him*, that is, *his Doctrine* (of which this is so great a part) *is not worthy of him*; and I fear no other Reason induces the Church of *England* to decline it.

To confirm what has been said, though I design Brevity, let me not lose another Passage very pregnant to our purpose; when his Disciples had accomplisht their first Mission, at their return they gave him the History of their Travels: Among the rest, they tell him of one they met with, that in his Name cast out Devils, but because he would not follow with them, *they forbad him*; here is at least a Dissenting Christian, though a Believer, yet it seems not one of that closer Congregation; we also see their Zeal and Sentence. But what says the Master, yet alive, and with them, the infallible Doctor, in whose Mouth was no Guile, who had not the Spirit by measure, and was the great Wisdom of God to his People, was he of the same mind, or did he leave them without rule in the Point? His Answer is this. *And* Jesus *said to them*, **forbid him not**! *for he that is not against us is for us.* The Prohibition is taken off, and their Judgment revers'd, and from his, to be sure, there lies no Appeal. For though a Power of Decision were allow'd to some one or more on Earth, in matters obscure and undetermin'd, yet in cases *already adjudged by the Son of God himself, who had the Chair, and could not Err*, there can be no room for another Judge.

Now to apply it, I must first say, I find no such Disciples among those that are of the side of keeping up the *Penal Laws*, God knows the disparity is but too unequal. But next, if they were all *Twelve* in *Westminster-Abby*, and should be of the side of upholding the *Penal Laws*, (which is the wrong side they were of before) I should beg their Pardon, if I were of their Masters mind, and objected his Wisdom to their Zeal, and his gentle Rule to their harsh and narrow Judgment. And I beseech the Church of *England* to consider, that no Pretence can excuse her Dissent, and less her cross Practice to the Judgment of her Saviour: *A Judgment that seems given and setled for the Conduct of the Church on the like Occasions in succeeding times*. And 'tis pity any worldly thing should have place with her to divert her Obedience. Did Christ then come to save Mens Lives, and not to destroy them? And should she (she I say, that pretends to be a reformed Church) uphold those Laws that do destroy them? He, Alas! went to another Village instead of burning them, or theirs, for refusing him: And she forbids any, that belongs to any other, to lodge in hers, upon pain of loosing Life or Estate; This may make her a *Samaritan* indeed; but not the good One, whose Example would have taught her, instead of these sharp and ruder Remedies,

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to have poured the Oyl of Peace and Gladness into those Chops and Wounds that Time and Heats of all Hands had made in every Religious Party of Men. Nor does she lose any thing by Repealing those Laws, but the Power of Persecuting, and a good Church would never have the Temptation. Come some body must begin to forgive, let her not leave that Honour to another, nor draw upon her self the Guilt and Mischief of refusing it. She pretends to fear the Strokes of the *Romanists*, but I would fain know of her, if following their Example will convert them, or secure her? Does she hope to keep them out by the Weapons that have fail'd in their Hands, or can she honourably censure Persecution in them, and yet use it her self?

But she is extreamly scandal'd and scared *at the Severity upon Protestants in France* 'Tis certainly very ill; but do not the Laws she is so fond of point at the same Work, Conformity, or Ruin. And don't we know, that in some Places, and upon some Parties her Magistrates have plow'd as deep Furrows, especially within these six and twenty Years. *Husbands separated from their Wives, Parents from their Children, the Widows Bed and the Orphans Milk made a Prize for Religion, Houses stript, Barns and Fields swept clean, Prisons crowded without regard to Sex or Age, and some of both sorts Dungeon'd to Death, and all for Religion.* If she says they were *peevish Men, Bigots*, or mov'd by *private Interest*, she still made the Laws, and says no more for her self than the French say for their King, which yet she refuses to take for an answer. Perhaps I could paralel some of the severest Passages in that Kingdom out of the Actions of some Members of the Church of *England* in *cool Blood*, that we are even yet for continuing the *Penal Laws* upon their plunder'd Neighbours; so that this Reflection of hers upon *France*, is more popular than just from her. But I beseech her to look upon a Country four times bigger than *France*; *Germany* I mean, and she will there see both Religions practis'd with great Ease and Amity, yet of this we must not hear one Word: I hope it is not for fear of imitating it. However 'tis disingenious to object the Mischiefs of Popery to a general Ease, when we see it is the way to prevent them. This is but in the name of Popery *to keep all to her self*, as well from Protestant Dissenters, as Roman Catholicks. How Christian, how equal, how safe, that narrow Method is, becomes her well to consider, & methinks she ought not to be long about it.

I know she flatters herself and others to believe, she is a *Bulwork* against Popery; and with that, without any farther Security to other Protestants, wipes her Mouth of all old Scores, and makes her present Court for Assistance. But when that word *Bulwork* is examined, I fear it appears too mean no more than this, *That she would keep out Popery for that reason for which she apprehends Popery would turn her out*, viz. Temporal Interest. But may I without Offence ask her, when she kept Persecution out? Or if she keeps out Popery for any bodies sake but her own? Nay, if it be not to hold the Power she has in her hands, that she would frighten other Parties (now she has done her worst) with what mischief Popery would do them when it has Power. But to speak freely, can she be a Bulwork in the Case, that has been bringing the worst part of Popery in these six and twenty Years, if *Persecution be* so as she says it is? This would be call'd *Canting* to the World in others. But I hear *she begins to see her Fault, is heartily sorry for it, and promises to do so no more:* And why may not Popery be as wise, that has also burnt her Fingers with the same work? Their praying for ease by *Law* looks as if they chose That rather than *Power* for Security; and if so, why may not the Papists Live, as well as she Reign? I am none of their Advocate, I am

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no Papist, but I would be just and merciful too. However, I must tell her, that keeping the Laws on foot, by which she did the mischief, is none of the plainest Evidences of her Repentance: They that can believe it, have little reason to quarrel the unaccountableness of Transubstantiation. Is it unjust in Popery to invade her Priviledges, and can it be just in her to provoke it, by denying a Christian Liberty? or can she expect what she will not give? or not do as she would be done by, because she fears others will not observe the same Rule to her? Is not this *doing Evil that Good may come of it*, and that uncertain too, against an express Command as well as common Charity? But to speak freely, whether we regard the Circumstances of the King, the Relation of his Children, the inequality of the Number and Strength of those of each of their Communions, we must conclude, that the Aversion of the Church of *England* to this intreated Liberty, cannot reasonably be thought to come from the Fear she has of the prevalency of Popery, but the loss of that Power the Law gives her to domineer over all Dissenters. And is not this a *Rare Motive* for a Christian Church to continue Penal Laws for Religion? If her Piety be not able to maintain her upon equal terms, methinks her having so much the whip hand and start of all others, should satisfy her Ambition, and quiet her Fears; for 'tis possible for her to keep the Churches if the Laws were abolished; all the difference is, she could not force: She might perswade and convince what she could: And pray, is not that enough for a true Church, without *Gaoles, Whips, Halters* and *Gibbets*? O what Corruption is that has prevail'd over Men of such Pretensions to Light and Conscience? that they do not, or will not, see nor feel their own Principles one remove from themselves; but sacrifice the noblest part of the Reformation to Ambition, and compel Men to truckle their tender Consciences to the Grandure and Dominion of their Doctors.

But because the Sons of the Church of *England* keep at this time, such a stir in her favour, and fix her excellency in her opposition to Popery, it is worth while to consider a little further, if really the most feared and disagreeable part of Popery in her own opinion, does not belong to her, and if it does, should we not be in a fine Condition, to be in love with our Fetters, and to court our Misery?

That part of *Popery* which the Church of *England* with most success objects against, is her *Violence*. This is that she can only pretend to feare. Her Doctrines she partly professes, or thinks she can easily refute. She does not think her Doctors *Conjurers* for their *Transubstantiation*, or *dangerous* to the State for their *Beads*, or their *Purgatory*. *But forcing others to their Faith, or ruining them for refusing it, is the terrible thing we are taught by her to apprehend.* Now granting this to be the case, in reference to the Roman Religion, where it is in the Chair: I ask, if the Church of *England*, with her better Doctrines, has not been guilty of this Impiety, and for that cause more blameable than the Church she opposes so much? If we look into her Acts of State, we find them many, and bitter, against all sorts of Dissenters. There is nigh twenty Laws made, and yet in force, to confirm Conformity, and they have been executed too, as far and as often as they thought it fit for her Interest to let them. *Some have been Hang'd, many Banish'd, more Imprisoned, and some to Death; and abundance Impoverish'd*; and all this meerly for Religion: Tho, by a base and barbarous use of Words, it has been call'd *Treason, Sedition, Routs and Riots*; the worst of aggravations, since they are not contented to make People unhappy for their Dissent, but rob them of all they had left, *their*

Innocency. This has been her State Craft to coin Guilt, and make men dangerous, to have her ends upon them. But that way of Palliating Persecution, by rendring a thing that it is not, and punishing men for Crimes they never committed, shew but little Conscience in the Projectors. The Church of *England* cry's out against Tansubstantiation, because of the Invisibility of the Change. She don't see Christ there, and therefore he is not there, and yet her Sons do the same thing. For tho all the tokens of a Riot are as invisible in a Dissenters Meeting, as Christ in the Transubstantiation, yet it must be a Riot without any more to do: The English of which is, 'tis a Riot to pray to God in the humblest and peaceablest manner in a Conventicle.

I know it is said, *The Blood shed in the foregoing Reign, and the Plots of the Papists against Queen* Elizabeth, *drew those Laws from the Church of* England. But this was no reason why she should do ill because they had done so: Besides, it may be answered, that that Religion having so long intermixt it self with worldy Power, it gave way to take the revenges of it. And certainly the great men of the Church of *England* endeavouring *to intercept Queen* Mary, *by proclaiming the Lady* Jane Gray, *and the Apprehension the Papists had of the better Title of* Mary *Queen of* Scots, *together with a long Possession*, were scurvy Temptations to kindle ill Designs against that extraordinary Queen. But tho nothing can excuse and less justifie those cruel Proceedings; yet if there were any reason for the Laws, it is plainly removed; for the Interests are joyn'd, and have been since King *James* the first came to the Crown. However, 'tis certain there were Laws enough, or they might have had them, to punish all civil Enormities, without the necessity of making any against them as Papists. And so the civil Government had stood upon its own Legs, and Vices only against it had been punishable by it. In short, it was the falsest Step that was made in all that great Queens Reign, and the most dishonourable to the Principles of the first Reformers, and therefore I know no better Reason why it should be continued, than that which made the *Cardinal* in the History of the *Council of Trent* oppose the Reformation at *Rome*; That tho it was true that they were in the wrong, yet the admitting of it *approved the Judgment of their Enemies, and so good-night to Infallibility*. Let not this be the Practice of the Church of *England*, and the rather, because she does not pretend to it: But let her reflect, that she has lost her King from her Religion, and they that have got him, naturally hope for theirs by him, that 'tis the end they labour'd, and the great use they have for him, and I would fain wonder that she never saw it before; but whether she did or no, why should she begrudg it, at least refuse it now? Since 'tis plain, that there is nothing we esteem dangerous in Popery that other Laws are not sufficient to secure us from: Have we not enough of them? let her think of more, and do the best she can to *discover Plotters, punish Traitors, suppress the Seditious, and keep the Peace better* than those we have can enable us to do: But for Gods sake, let us never direct Laws against Men for the cause of Religion, or punish them before they have otherwise done amiss. Let Mens Works, not their Opinions, turn the Edg of the Magistrates Sword against them, else 'tis Beheading them before they are Born.

By the common Law of this Kingdom there must be some *Real and Proper Overt Act* that proves Treason; some *Malice* that proves Sedition; and some *violent Action* that proves a Rout or Riot. If so, *to call any sort of Religious Orders*, the one, or *Praying to God in a way out of fashion*, the other, is prepostrous, and punishing People for it, down right *Murther*, or *Breach of the Peace*, according to the true use of Words, and the old Law of *England*.

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If the Church of *England* fears the growth of Popery, let her be true to the Religion she owns, and betake her self to *Faith*, rather than *Force*, by a *pious, humble*, and a *good Example*: To *convince* and *perswade*, which is the highest honour to any Church, and the greatest Victory over men. I am for a National Church as well as she, so it be by *Consent*, and not by *Constraint*. But Coercive Churches have the *same Principle*, tho not the same *Interest*. A Church, *by Law established*, is a State-Church, and that is no Argument of Verity, unless the State that makes her so be infallible; and because that will not be asserted, the other can never oblige the Conscience, and consequently the Compulsion she uses, is unreasonable. This very Principle *justifies the King of* France, *and the Inquisition*. For Laws being equally of Force in all Countries where they are made, it must be as much Fault in the Church of *England's* Judgment to be a *Protestant* at *Rome*, or a *Calvinist* at *Paris*, as to be a *Papist* at *London*: Then where is Truth or Conscience but in the Laws of Countries? which renders her an *Hobbist*, notwithstanding her long and loud Clamours against the *Leviathan*.

I beg her, for the Love of Christ, that she would think of these things, and not esteem me her Enemy for performing the part of so good a Friend. Plain Dealing becomes that Character; no matter whether the Way be agreeable, so it be right: we are all to do our Duty, and leave the rest to God: He can best answer for our Obedience, that commands it; and our Dependance upon his Word, will be our Security in our Conduct. What weight is it to a Church, that she is *The Church by Law established*, when no humane Law can make a true Church? A true Church is of *Christs making*, and is by Gospel established. 'Tis a Reflection to a Church that would be thought true, to *stoop* to humane Law for her Establishment. I have been often scandal'd at that Expression from the Sons of the Church of *England*, especially those of the Robe, *What do you talk for? our Religion is by Law established*, as if that determin'd the Question of its Truth against all other Perswasions.

The *Jews* had this to say against our Saviour, *We have a Law, and by our Law he ought to Dye*. The Primitive Christians, and some of our first Reformers Died *as by Law established*, if that would mend the matter; but does that make it lawful to a Christian Conscience? we must ever demur to this Plea. No greater Argument of a Churches Defection from Christianity than turning Persecutor. 'Tis true, the Scripture says, *The Earth shall help the Woman*, but that was to save her self, *not to destroy others*: For 'tis the Token that's given by the Holy Ghost of a false Church; *That none must Buy or Sell in her Dominions that will not receive her Mark in their Forehead, or Right hand*. That is by going to Church against Conscience, or bribing lustily to stay at Home.

Things don't change, tho men do, Persecution is still the same, let the hand alter never so often; but the Sin may not: For doubtless it is greatest in those that make the highest claim to Reformation. For while they plead their own Light for doing so, they hereby endeavour to *extinguish* anothers Light that can't concur. What a Man can't do, *it is not his Fault he don't do, nor should he be compell'd to do it, and at least of all be punished for not doing it. No Church can give Faith, and therefore can't force it; for what is constrain'd is not Believed; since Faith is in that sense free, and constraint gives no time to assent; I say, what I don't will is not I, and what I don't choose is none of mine, and anothers can't save me, tho it should save him.* So that this Method never obtains the end design'd, since it Saves no body, because it Converts no body; it may breed *Hypocrisie*, but that is quite another thing than *Salvation*.

What then is the use of Penal Laws? only to shew the Sincerity of them that Suffer, *and Cruelty of those that make and execute them.* And all time tells us they have ever fail'd those that have lean'd upon them: They have always been losers at last: Besides, it is a most unaccountable obstinacy in the Church of *England* to stickle to uphold them, for after having made it a matter of Religion and Conscience to Address the late King in behalf of this, to think He should leave his Conscience in *Flanders*, or when they waited on him to the Crown, that he should send it thither upon a Pilgrimage, is want of Wit at best, pardon the censure. Could they conscientiously oppose his Exclusion for his Religion, and now his Religion because he will not leave it? Or can they reasonably maintain those *Tests* that were contrived to exclude him when *Duke of York*, while they endured none to *hinder him from the Crown*? I heartily beg the Church of *England's* excuse, if I say I can't comprehend her: Perhaps the fault is mine, but sure I am she is extreamly dark. How could she hope for this King without his Conscience? or conceive that his Honour or Conscience would let him leave the Members of his Communion under the lash of so many Destroying Laws? would she be so serv'd by a Prince of her own Religion, and she in the like circumstances? She would not, let her talk till Doomsday.

To object the *Kings Promise*, when he came to the Crown, against the Repeal of the Penal Laws, shows not his Insincerity, but her Uncharitableness, or that really she has a very weak place: For it is plain the King *first declared* his own Religion, and then *promised to maintain hers*; but was that to be without, or together with his own? His Words shows he intended that his own should *Live*, tho t'other might *Reign*. I say again, it is not credible that a Prince of any Sincerity can refuse a being to his own Religion, when he continues another in its well being. This were to act upon *State* not *Conscience*, and to make more Conscience to uphold a Religion he cannot be of, *than of giving ease to one his Conscience obliges him to be of.* I cannot imagin how *this Thought* could enter into any Head that had Brains, or Heart that had Honesty. And to say true, they must be a sort of State Consciences, *Consciences* as by Law Established, that can follow the Law against their Convictions.

But this is not all I have to observe from that Objection: It implies too evidently, first, that she thinks her self *shaken*, if the Penal Laws be repeal'd; then by Law Established she must mean, *Established by those Penal Laws.* Secondly, That the King having promised to maintain her, as by Law established, *he ought not to endeavour their Repeal by which she is established.* I confess this is very close arguing, but then she must not take it ill, if all Men think her ill founded; for any thing must be so, that is establish'd by destroying Laws? Laws, that *Time* and *Practice* have declared Enemies to *Property* and *Conscience*. O let her not hold by that Charter, nor point thither for her Establishment and Defence, if she would be thought a Christian Church.

Plutarch had rather one should think there never was such a Man in the World, than that *Plutarch* was an ill Man. Shall the Church of *England*, that glories in a great Light, *be more concern'd for her Power, than her Credit?* To be, than to be that which she should be? I would say, far be it from her, for her own sake, and which is of much more moment, for the sake of the general Cause of Religion.

Let us see therefore if there be not another way of understanding those

Words,

Words, more decent to the King, and more honourable for her, *viz.* that she is in the *National Chair, has the Churches and Revenues, and is Mother of those that do not adhere to any seperate Communion, and that the King has promised to maintain her in this Post from the Invasions of any other Perswasion that would wrest those Priviledges out of her hands*: this he promised formerly; this he has very particularly repeated in his gracious Declaration: But to Ruin Men that would not Conform, while himself was so great a Dissenter, and came such, to her knowledge, to the Crown, can be no part of his Promises in the Opinion of common Sense and Charity. Is there no Difference to be observed between not turning her out, and destroying all others not of her Communion: He will not turn her out, there's his Promise, and he has not done it, there's his Performance: Nor will he do it, I am confident, if she pleases. But there is no manner of necessity from this Engagement that all Parties else are to be Confounded. Tho if it were so, 'tis ill Divinity to press such Promises upon a Princes Conscience, that can't be perform'd with a good One by Any Body.

Let her remember how often she has upbraided her Dissenters with this, *Render to* Cæsar *the things that are* Cæsars, whilst they have returned upon her t'other half of the Text, *and render unto God the things that are Gods*. It happens now that *God* and *Cæsar* are both of a mind, which perhaps does not always fall out, at least about the Point in hand. Will she Dissent from both now? Her case, believe me, will be doubtful then. I beg her to be Considerate. 'Tis the greatest time of Tryal she has met with since she was a Church. To acquit her self like a Member of Christs Universal One, let her keep nothing that voids her Pretensions. The *Babylonish* Garment will undo her. Practices Inconsistent with her Reformation will ruin her. The *Martyrs* Blood Won the Day, and her Severity has almost lost it. They Suffer'd by Law, she makes Laws *for Suffering*. Is this an Imitation of their practice, *to uphold the Weapons of their Destruction?* I must tell her, 'tis being a *Martyr* for Persecution, and not by it. Another Path then that the holy Ancients, and our humble Ancestors trod, and which will lead her to be deserted and contemn'd of every body that counts it safer to follow the Blessed Rule and Practice of Christ and his inspir'd Messengers, then her narrow and worldly Policies. But that which heightens the Reproach, is the Offer of the Romanists themselves to make a perpetual civil Peace with her, and that she refuses. Would the Martyrs have done this? surely no. Let her remember the first Argument honest old *Fox* advances against that Church, is the Church of *England* present Darling, *viz.* Penal Laws for Religion; as she may see at the beginning of his first Volumn: Doubtless he was much in the right, which makes her extreamly in the wrong. Nothing, says the Prophet, must harm in Gods holy Mountain, and that's the Church, says *Fox*, and therefore he says, Christs Church never Persecutes. Leave then God with his own Work, and Christ with his own Kingdom. As it is not of the World, let not the World touch it, no, *not to uphold it*, tho they that bear it should trip by the way. Remember *Uzza*, he would needs support the Ark *when the Oxen* stumbled; *but was Struck dead for his pains*. The Presumption is more than parallel. Christ promis'd *to be present with his Church to the end of the World*. He bid them *fear not*, and told them, *That sufficient was the Day for the Evil thereof*. How? with Penal Laws? no such matter; but his Divine Presence. Therefore it was, He call'd not for *Legions* to fight for him, because his Work needed it not. They that want them have another sort of Work

to do: And 'tis too plain, that *Empire*, and not Religion, has been too much the Buſineſs. But, O let it not be ſo any more! To be a *True* Church is better than to be a *National* One; eſpecially as ſo upheld. *Profs Vertue, Puniſh Vice, Diſpence with Opinion; Perſwade*, but don't *Impoſe*. Are there *Tares* in Opinion? Let them alone; you heard *they are to grow with the Wheat till Harveſt*, that is, *the end of the World. Should they* not be pluckt up before? No; and 'tis *Angels* Work at laſt too. Chriſt that knew all Men, ſaw no hand on Earth fit for that Buſineſs. Let us not then uſurp their Office. Beſides, *we are to Love Enemies*; this is the great Law of our Religion; *by what Law then are we to Perſecute them*; and if not Enemies, not Friends and Neighbours certainly.

The Apoſtle rejoyced *that Chriſt was preached out of Envy*: If ſo, I am ſure we ought not to envy Chriſtians the enjoyment of the Liberty of their Conſciences. Chriſtianity ſhould be propagated by the Spirit of Chriſtianity, and not by Violence or Perſecution, for that's the Spirit of Antichriſtianity. Nor for fear of it, ſhould we, of Chriſtians, become Antichriſtians. Where is Faith in God? where is Truſt in Providence? Let us do our Duty, and leave the reſt with Him; *and not do Evil that Good may come of it*; for that ſhows a Diſtruſt in God, and a Confidence in our own Inventions for ſecurity. No reaſon of State can excuſe our Diſobedience to his *Rule*; and we deſert the Principles of our heavenly Maſter when we decline it. The Queſtion is about Conſcience, about this we can none of us be too tender nor exemplary. 'Tis in right doing that Chriſtians can hope for Succeſs; and for true Victory only through Faith and Patience. But if to avoid what we fear, we contradict our Principles, we may juſtly apprehend *that God will diſcern us in an unlawful way of maintaining them*. Perhaps this may be Gods time of trying all Parties, what we will do; whether we will rely upon him or our own feeble Proviſions; whether we will allow what we our ſelves in our turn *have all of us deſired*: if not, may we not expect to ſuffer the thing we would inflict? for our *Penal Laws* cannot ſecure us from the turns of Providence, and leſs ſupport us under them. Let us conſider the true ground of the difficulty that is made, if it be not partial and light in Gods Scale, for to that tryal all things muſt come, and his Judgment is inevitable as well as infallible. Beſides, if we have not tryed all other methods, we are inexcuſable in being ſo tenacious for this. I do therefore, in all humility, beſeech all ſorts of Profeſſors of Chriſtianity in theſe Kingdoms, to abſtract themſelves from thoſe Jealouſies which worldly motives are apt to kindle in their Minds, and with an even and undiſturbed Soul purſue their Chriſtian Duty in this great Conjuncture: Conſidering *the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong*, and that for all our Watchmen, *'tis God alone* (at laſt) *that keeps the City*, Not that I would decline a fitting, but an unchriſtian Proviſion: For though the Foundation were never ſo true, yet if our Superſtructure be *Hay* and *Stalle* (our own narrow Devices) the Fire will conſume it, and our Labour will be worſe than in vain. Let us not therefore *Sow what we would not Reap, becauſe we muſt Reap what we ſow*: And remember who told us, *What we meaſure to others ſhall be meeted to us again*. Let us therefore do unto all Parties of men, *as we would be done unto by them in their Turn of Power*: Leſt our fear of their unfaithfulneſs, *ſhould tempt us out of our Duty*; and ſo draw upon our ſelves the miſchiefs we are afraid of. Sacred Writ is full of this, in the Doctrine of both Teſta-

ments;

ments; and as we profeſs to believe it, we are inexcuſable if we do not practice it. Let the Spirit then of Chriſtian Religion prevail. Let our Policies give way to our Duty, and our Fears will be overcome of our Hopes, which will not make us aſham'd at the laſt and great Judgment: where, O God! let us all appear with Comfort.

I could yet Enlarge upon this Subject; for nothing can be more fruitful. I could ſay, that a Church that *Denies* Infallibility, cannot *force*, becauſe ſhe cannot be *certain*, and ſo *Penal Laws* (though it were poſſible that they could be lawful in others) in her, *would be Unjuſt*. That Scripture leaves Men to *Conviction* and *Perſwaſion*. That the true Church-Weapons are *Light* and *Grace*; and her puniſhments, *Cenſure* and *Excommunication*. That *Goals* and *Gibbets* are Inadiquated Methods for Converſion, and that they never *ſucceeded*. That this *forbids* all further light to come into the World, and ſo *limits* the Holy One, which in Scripture is made a great Sin. And laſtly, that ſuch enſnare their own Poſterity that may be of another mind, and forfit by it the eſtates they have ſo carefully tranſmitted to them. Thus far againſt Impoſition. And againſt Compliance. I could ſay, that its to betray Gods Soveraignty over Conſcience; To deifie Men; Gratifie Preſumption; foil and extinguiſh Truth in the Mind; obey blindfold; make over the Soul without Security; turn Hipocrite, and abundance more; each of which Heads might well merit an whole Chapter. But this having been well and ſeaſonably conſider'd elſewhere, I ſhall now proceed to the ſecond part of this diſcourſe, in which I will be as brief, and yet as full as I can.

PART II.

That 'tis the Principle of Men of Note of all Parties.

BUT what need is there of this, may ſome ſay, when all Parties profeſs to be of the ſame Judgment, *That Conſcience ought not to be forced, nor Religion impoſed upon Men at their civil peril?* I own they are all of that mind, at one time or other, and therefore that I may purge my ſelf of any Animoſity to the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, I will Ingeniouſly confeſs, the ſevere conduct I have argued againſt, is not to be imputed to her Principles; but then her Evil will be the greater, that in fact has ſo notoriouſly contradicted them. I know ſome of her defenders will hardly allow that too; Though the more candid give us their Silence or Confeſſion: For they tell us, *'tis not the Church that has done it*, which, unleſs they mean, the Laws were not made a Church, muſt needs be falſe, ſince thoſe that made and executed them were of her own Communion, and are that great body of Members that conſtitute her a Church; but by her ſhifting them off, 'tis but reaſonable to Conclude that ſhe tacitly Condemns what ſhe publickly diſowns. One would think then it ſhould not be ſo

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hard to perſwade her to quit them, in the way ſhe made them, or to injoyn her Sons to do it, if that language be to harſh for her. This Story ſhe muſt hear of ſome way, and I pray God ſhe may endeavour to do her Duty in it. She is not alone; for every Party in Power has too evidently lapſt into this Evil; though under the prevalency and perſecution of another Intereſt they have ever writ againſt club Law for Religion. And to the end that I may do the Reformation Right, and the Principles of the Church of *England*, Juſtice; I muſt ſay, that hardly one perſon of any note dyed in the time of Queen *Mary*, that did not paſs Sentence upon Perſecution as Antichriſtian, particularly *Latimer*, *Philpot*, *Bradford*, *Rogers*, very eminent Reformers. The Apologies that were writ in thoſe times, are of the ſame ſtrain, as may be ſeen in *Jewel*, *Haddon*, *Reynalds*, *&c.* and the Papiſts were with reaſon thought much in the wrong by thoſe Primitive Proteſtants, for the Perſecution that they raiſed againſt them, for matters of pure Religion. But what need we go ſo far back? is it not recent in memory, that Biſhop *Uſher* was employed to *O. Cromwell* by ſome of the Clergy of the Church of *England* for Liberty of Conſcience? Doctor *Parr*, in the Life of Doctor *Uſher* Primate of *Ardmagh*, fol. 75. has that paſſage.

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'obtrude upon others necessarily, because they cannot propound them Infallibly, and because they have no Warrant from Scripture so to do; for if I 'shall tye other men to believe my Opinion, because I think I have a place 'of Scripture which seems to warrant it to my understanding; why may he 'not serve up another dish to me in the same dress, and exact the same task 'of me to believe the contradictory? *Liberty of Prophesie*, Epist. Dedict. pag. '8, 9.

'The experience which Christendom hath had in this last Age is Argument 'enough that *Toleration of differing Opinions* is so far from disturbing the publick 'Peace, or destroying the Interest of Princes and Common-wealths, that it does 'advantage to the Publick, it secures Peace, because there is not so much as the 'pretence of *Religion* left to such Persons to contend for, it being already indulged 'to them. *ibid. pag.* 21.

'It is a proverbial saying, *Quod nimia familiaritas servorum est conspiratio adversus 'Dominum*, and they who for their Security run in Grots and Cellars and 'Retirements, think that they being upon the defensive, those Princes and 'those Laws that drive them to it are their Enemies, and therefore they cannot 'be secure, unless the Power of the one, and the Obligation of the other be 'lessened and rescinded; and then the being restrained and made miserable 'indears the discontented persons mutually, and makes more hearty and dan-'gerous Confederations. *ibid. pag.* 23.

'No man speaks more unreasonably, than he that *denies to men the use of their 'Reason in choice of their Religion.* ibid. pag. 169.

'*No Christian is to be put to Death, Dismembred, or otherwise directly Persecuted for 'his Opinion, which does not teach Impiety or Blasphemy.* ibid. pag. 190.

'There is a popular Pity that follows all persons in Misery, and that Com-'passion breeds likeness of Affections, and that very often produces likeness 'of Persuasion; and so much the rather because there arises a Jealousie and pre-'gnant Suspicion, that they who persecute an Opinion are destitute of sufficient 'Arguments to confute it, and that the Hangman is the best Disputant. *ibid. pag.* 197, 198.

'If a man cannot change his Opinion when he lists, nor ever does heartily 'or resolutely; but when he cannot do otherwise, then to use Force, may make 'him a Hypocrite, but never to be a right Believer; and so instead of erecting 'a Trophy to God and true Religion, *we build a Monument for the Devil.* ibid. pag. 200.

'The *Trick* of giving Persons differing in Opinion over to the secular Power, 'at the best is no better than *Hypocrisie*, removing Envy from themselves, and 'laying it upon others, a refusing to do that in external Act, *which they do in 'Council and Approbation.* ibid. pag. 209.

Thus far *Bishop Taylor*, and one of the most Learned Men of the Church of *England* in his time.

Let me add another Bishop, held Learned by all, and in great Reputation with the men of his Communion, and among them *the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled*, who have sufficiently declared against this persecuting Spirit on the account of Religion, by their full approbation of, and *Thanks returned to the Bishop of St. Asaph for his Sermon preached before them* November *the* 5th, 1680. *and their desire that he would Print and Publish that Sermon.* The Bishop says, that 'They who are most given to Hate and to destroy others, especial-

'ly

'ly those others who differ from them in Religion, they are not the *Church of* '*God*, or at least they are so far corrupt in that particular. *pag.* 8

Again he says, 'That, of Societies of Men, Christians, of all others, are most 'averse from ways of Violence and Blood; especially from using any such 'ways upon the account of Religion: And among Christian Churches, where 'they differ among themselves, if either of them use those ways upon the ac'count of Religion, they give a strong Presumption against themselves that 'they are not truly Christians. *ibid. pag.* 9.

'There is reason for this, because, we know that Christ gave Love for the 'Character by which his Disciples were to be known, *John* 13. 35. *By this* '*shall all men know that you are my Disciples, if you have Love to one another.* And 'lest men should unchristen others first, that they may Hate them, and Destroy 'them afterwards, Christ enlarged his Precept of Love, and extended it even 'to Enemies, and not only to ours, but to the Enemies of our Religion, *Matt.* 5. 43, 44. *ibid. pag.* 9.

'As our holy Religion excels all others in this admirable temper, so by this 'we may usually judge who they are that excel among Christian Churches, when 'there happens any difference between them, whether touching the Faith, or 'the terms of Communion. They that were the more fierce, they generally 'had the worst Cause. *ibid. pag.* 12, 13.

'The Council of Nice suppressed the *Arians* by no other Force, but put'ting *Arians* out of their Bishopricks; they could not think Hereticks fit to be 'trusted with cure of Souls; but otherwise, as to *Temporal things*, I do not find 'that they inflicted any kind of Punishment; but when the *Arians* came to 'have the *Power* in their Hands, when theirs was come to be the **Imperial** '**Religion**, then Depriving was nothing, Banishment was the least that they 'inflicted. *ibid. pag.* 14.

'Neither our Religion, nor our Church, is of a *persecuting* Spirit. I know 'not how it may be in particular persons; but I say again, it is not in the Ge'nius of our Church: She hath no Doctrine that *teacheth Persecution. ibid. p.* 20.

'I would have no man punished for his Religion, no not them that destroy 'men for Religion. *ibid. pag.* 37.

Dr. *Stillingfleet* comes short of none of them on this Subject. 'Our Saviour, 'says he, never *pressed* Followers as men do *Souldiers*, but said, *If any man will* 'come after me, let him take up his Cross (not his Sword) and follow me. His way 'ΗΜΕΡΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ ΝΟΜΟΘΕΣΙΑ. 'his very Commands shewed his Meekness; his 'Laws were sweet and gentle Laws; not like 'Draco's that writ in Blood, unless it were his 'own that gave them. His design was to ease 'men of their former Burdens, and not lay on 'more; the Duties he required were no other 'but such as were necessary, and withal very just and reasonable. He that came 'to take away the insupportable Yoke of Jewish Ceremonies, certainly did never 'intend to gall the Necks of his Disciples with another instead of it. And it 'would be strange the Church should require more than Christ himself did; 'and make other conditions of her Communion, *than our Saviour did of Disci*'*pleship.* What possible reason can be assigned or given why such things should 'not be sufficient for Communion with a Church, *which are sufficient for eternal*

Irenicum, a *Weapon-Salve for the Churches Wounds*, by Edward Stillingfleet, *Rector of* Suton *in* Bedfordshire, *in Preface to the Reader.*

Salvation? And certainly those things are sufficient for that, which are laid down as necessary Duties for Christianity by our Lord and Saviour in his Word. *What ground can there be why Christians should not stand upon the same Terms now which they did in the time of Christ and his Apostles?* Was not Religion sufficiently guarded and fenced in then? Was there ever more true and cordial Reverence in the Worship of God? What *Charter* hath Christ given the Church to *bind men up to more than himself hath done?* or to exclude those from her Society who may be admitted into Heaven? Will Christ ever thank Men at the great day for keeping such out from Communion with his Church, when he will vouchsafe not only Crowns of Glory to, but it may be *Aureola* too, if there be any such things there? The Grand Commission the Apostles were sent out with, was only to *teach what Christ had commanded them.* Not the least Intimation of any Power given them to impose or require any thing beyond what himself had spoken to them, or they were directed to by the immediate Guidance of the Spirit of God.

'Without all controversie, the main Inlet of all the Distractions, Confusions 'and Divisions of the Christian World, hath been by adding other conditions 'of Church-communion than Christ hath done.

'There is nothing the *Primitive Church* deserves greater imitation by us in, than 'in that admirable Temper, Moderation and Condescension which was used 'in it towards all the Members of it

'This admirable Temper in the Primitive Church might be largely cleared 'from that Liberty they allowed freely to Dissenters from them in matters of 'Practice and Opinion; as might be cleared from *Cyprian, Austin, Jerome,* and 'others. —— Leaving the Men to be won by observing the true Decency and 'Order of Churches, whereby those who act upon a true Principle of Christi-'an Ingenuity may be sooner drawn to a Compliance in all lawful things, than 'by Force and rigorous Impositions, which make men suspect the weight of 'the thing it self, when such Force is used to make it enter. *in Preface.*

The same is in effect declared by the *House of Commons,* when they returned their Thanks to Dr. *Tillotson, Dean of Canterbury,* for his Sermon preached before them *Novemb.* the 5*th*, 1678. *desiring him to Print that Sermon,* where he says, upon our *Saviours* Words, 'Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of, Ye own 'your selves to be my Disciples, but do you consider what Spirit now Acts 'and Governs you? not that surely which my Doctrine designes to mould and 'fashion you into, which is not a *Furious and Persecuting,* and *Destructive Spirit,* 'but Mild and Gentle, and Saving; tender of the Lives and Interests of men, 'even of those who are our greatest Enemies. *pag.* 6, 7.

'No difference of Religion, no pretence of Zeal for God and Christ can 'warrant and justifie this Passionate and Fierce, this Vindictive and Exterminating Spirit. *ibid. pag.* 7.

'He (*i. e.* Christ) came to introduce a Religion, which consults not only the 'Eternal Salvation of mens Souls, but their Temporal Peace and Security, 'their Comfort and Happiness in this World. *ibid. pag.* 8.

'It seemed good to the Author of this Institution to compel no man to it by 'Temporal Punishment, *ibid. pag.* 13.

'To *separate* Goodness and Mercy from God, Compassion and Charity from 'Religion, is to make the two best things in the World, God and Religion, good 'for nothing, *ibid. pag.* 19.

'True

'True Christianity is not only the best, but the best natured Institution in the 'World; and so far as any Church is departed from good Nature, and be-'come Cruel and Barbarous, so far it is degenerated from Christianity, *ibid.* *pag.* 30.

Thus far Doctor *Tillotson*, who, to be sure, deserves not to be thought the least Eminent in the present Church of *England*. Let us hear what Doctor *Burnet* says to it.

'Men are not Masters of their own Perswasions, and cannot change their 'thoughts as they please; he that believes any thing concerning Religion, '*cannot turn as the Prince commands him, or accommodate himself to the Law, or his* '*present Interests*, unless he arrive at that pitch of *Atheism*, as to look on Reli-'gion only as a matter of Policy, and an Engine for civil Government; Dr. '*Burnets History of the Rights of Princes*, &c. in his Preface, pag. 49.

'Tis to this Doctor's pains she owes the very History of her Reformation, and as by it he has perpetuated his Name with hers, certainly he must have Credit with her, or she can deserve none with any body else, for no man could well go further to oblige her.

Let me here bring in a lay Member of the Church of *England*,' Sir *Robert Pointz*, in his vindication of *Monarchy*, who yields us an excellent Testimony to the matter in hand, 'The Sword *availeth little* with the Souls of 'Men, unless to *destroy* them together with their Bodies, and to make men '*desperate*, or *dissemblers* in Religion, and when they find opportunity to fall 'into *Rebellion*, as there are many Examples, *p.* 27.

'In the Ancient times of Christianity, such means were not used as might '*make Heretick and Schismatick more obstinate than docible, through the preposterous* 'Proceedings *of the Magistrates and Ministers of Justice in the Execution of Penal* 'Laws, used rather as *Snares* for gaining of Money and Pecuniary Mulcts 'impos'd, rather as *Prices* set upon Offences, than as Punishments for the Re-'formation of Manners. *ibid. pag.* 28.

'The *Ancient Christians* were forbidden by the *Imperial Law*, 'as also by the Laws of other Christian Nations, under a great Penalty to *meddle with the Goods of the Jews or Pagans* living peacea-'bly. *ibid. pag.* 29. *L. 6 Cod. de Paganis.*

'For, the Goods of the *Jews*, although Enemies to the Christian Religion, '*cannot for the cause of Religion come by Escheat unto Christian Princes*, under whom 'they Live. *ibid. pag.* 29.

'It is truly said, that Peace, a Messenger whereof, an *Angel* hath been cho-'sen to be, *is scarce ever Established by the Sword:* and the *Gospel*, the blessed Peace, 'cannot be publisht by the *Sound of the Cannon*; neither the *Sacred Word* be con-'veyed unto us by the *impious hands of Souldiers*; neither *Tranquility* be brought 'to the Persons and Consciences of Men, *by that which bringeth Ruin unto Na-*'*tions*. ibid. pag. 30.

He has said much in a little, the Talent and Honour of Men truly great. I give this still to the Church of *England*'s Principles, which yet makes it harder for her to justifie her Practice in her use of Power. But let us hear a King speak, and one the Church of *England* is bound to hear by many Obligations.

King *Charles* the First, out of his *tender* and *princely* sence of the *sad* and *bleeding Condition* of the Kingdom, and his unwearied Desires to apply such

Remedies, as by the bleſſing of Almighty God, might ſettle it in peace; by the Advice of his Lords and Commons of Parliament Aſſembled at *Oxford*, propounded and deſired, that all the Members of both Houſes might ſecurely meet in a full and free Convention of Parliament, there to *treat*, *conſult* and *agree* upon ſuch *things*, as may *conduce* to the *maintenance* and *defence* of the Reformed Proteſtant Religion, with due conſideration to all *juſt* and *reaſonable eaſe* to *tender Conſciences*. The Kings Meſſage of a Treaty, *March* 3. 1643. from *Oxford*, Superſcribed to the Lords and Commons of Parliament aſſembled at *Weſtminſter*.

In the Kings Twentieth Meſſage for Peace, *January* 29. 1645. he has theſe Words, 'That by the Liberty offered in his Meſſage of the fifth preſent, for the 'eaſe of their *Conſciences* who will not *Communicate* in the Service already eſtabliſh-'ed by Act of Parliament in this Kingdom, He intends that all other Proteſtants 'behaving themſelves peaceable in and towards the civil Government, ſhall have 'the free Exercise of their *Religion* according to their *own way*.

In the Thirty third Meſſage for Peace, *Nov.* 17. 1647. there are theſe Words, 'His Majeſty conſidering the great preſent *Diſtempers* concerning *Church Diſci-'pline*, and that the *Presbyterian Government* is now in practice, his Majeſty to eſ-'chew *Confuſion*, as much as may be, and for the ſatisfaction of his two Houſes, 'is content that the ſaid Government be legally permitted to ſtand in the ſame 'Condition it now is, for three Years; provided, that his Majeſty, and thoſe of 'his Judgment (or any other who cannot in *Conſcience* ſubmit thereunto) be not 'obliged to comply with the Presbyterian Government, but have free Practice 'of their own Profeſſion without receiving any Prejudice thereby. *From the Iſle of* Wight.

In his Declaration to all his People, *Jan.* 18. 1645. from *Carisbrook* Caſtle, after the Votes of no Addreſs, He ſays, 'I have ſacrificed to my two Houſes of Par-'liament, for the Peace of the Kingdom, all, but what is much more dear to 'me then my Life, my *Conſcience* and my *Honour*.

In his Letter to the Lords, Gentlemen and Committee of the Scotch Parliament, together with the Officers of the Army, *July* 3. 1648. from *Carisbrook* Caſtle. '—— As the beſt foundation of *Loyalty* is *Chriſtianity*, ſo true *Chri-'ſtianity* is perfect Loyalty.

VI. EIKON BASIA. Upon his Majeſties retirement from *Weſtminſter*. '—— Sure it ceaſes to be Counſel, when not *Reaſon* is uſed, as to Men to *Per-'ſwade*, but *Force* and *Terror* as to Beaſts, to *drive* and *compel* men to whatever 'tumultuary Patrons ſhall project. He deſerves to be a *Slave* without Pity or 'Redemption, that is content to have his Rational *Soveraignty* of his *Soul*, and '*Liberty* of his *Will* and *Words* ſo captivated. — Again, ibid. 'Sure that Man 'cannot be blameable to God or Man, who ſeriouſly indeavours to *ſee* the 'beſt *reaſon* of *things*, and *faithfully* follows what he takes for *reaſon*; the *up-'rightneſs* of his *Intentions* will excuſe the poſſible failings of his *Underſtanding*. —— Again, ibid. 'I know no Reſolutions more worthy a *Chriſtian King*, 'then to prefer his *Conſcience* before his *Kingdoms*.

XII. Upon the Rebellion and Troubles in *Ireland*, '—— Some kind of Zeal 'counts all *merciful Moderation Lukewarmneſs*, and had rather be *Cruel* than ac-'counted *Cold*, and is not ſeldom more greedy to kill the Bear for her Skin, 'than for any harm he hath done. —— ibid. O mp God, thou ſeeſt how 'much Cruelty among Chriſtians is acted under the colour of Religion, as

if

'if we could not be Christians unless we Crucifie one another.

XIII. Upon the calling the *Scots* and their coming. '—— Sure in matters 'of *Religion* those *Truths* gain most on mens *Judgments* and *Consciences* which are 'least urged with Secular *Violence*, which weakens Truth with Prejudices; and 'is unreasonable to be used, till such means of rational Conviction hath been 'applied, as leaving no excuse for Ignorance condemns mens Obstinacy to de-'serv'd Penalties. —— Violent Motions are neither Manly, Christian nor 'Loyal. — The proper Engine of Faction is Force; the Arbitrator of *Beasts*, 'not of *reasonable Men*, much less of *humble Christians* and *loyal Subjects*, in mat-'ters of Religion.

XIV. Upon the Covenant. '—— Religion requires *Charity* and *Candor* to 'others of different Opinions. —— Nothing Violent and Injurious can be Re-'ligious.

XV. Upon the many Jealousies raised, and Scandals cast upon the King to stir up the People against him. '—— In point of true Conscien-'tious Tenderness (attended with Humility and Meekness, not with proud or 'arrogant Activity, which seeks to hatch every egge of indifferent Opinion to 'Faction or Schism) I have oft declared how little I desire my *Laws* and *Sce-'pter* should intrench over Gods Sovereignty, which is the only King of mens 'Consciences.

XVII. To the Prince of *Wales*. '—— Take heed of abetting to any Factio-'ons; your partial adhering to any one Side gains you not so great Advantages 'in some Mens Hearts (who are *prone* to be of their Kings Religion) as it lo-'seth you in others, who think themselves, and their Profession, first despised, 'then persecuted by you. —— My Counsel and Charge to you is, That you 'seriously consider the former real or objected Miscarriages, which might oc-'casion my Troubles, that you may avoid them. —— A Charitable Connis-'vance and Christian Toleration, often dissipates their Strength whom *rough-'er Opposition* fortifies. —— Always keep up Solid Piety and those Funda-'mental Truths (which mend both Hearts and Lives of Men) with impar-'tial Favour and Justice. —— Your Prerogative is best shewed and exercised 'in *remitting* rather than exacting the rigour of the Law, there being nothing 'worse than legal Tyranny.

And as this was the Sense and Judgment of a King that Time and the great-est Troubles had inform'd with a superiour Judgment, (and which to be sure highly justifies the measures that are now taken) So Dr. *Hudson*, his *Plain-dealing Chaplain*, must not be forgotten by us on this occasion, who took the freedom to tell his Royal Master, *That he look'd upon the Calamities he laboured under, to be the Hand of God upon him, for not having given God his due over Conscience.*

One can easily imagin this to be Reformation-Language, and then it is not hard to think how low that Church must be fallen, that from so free and ex-cellent a Principle, is come to make, execute and uphold *Penal Laws* for Re-ligion, against her Conscientious Neighbours; but it is to be hoped, that like *Nebuchadnezzars Image*, whose Feet was a mixture of *Iron* and *Clay*, and there-fore could not stand for ever; Persecution will not be able to mix so with the Seed of Men but that Humanity will overcome it, and Mankind one day be delivered from that Iron hard and fierce Nature.

I have done with my Church of *Englands* Evidences against Persecution.

And

And for the Judgment of all ſorts of Diſſenters in that Point, let their Practice have been what it will, nothing is clearer than that they diſallow of Perſecution, of which their daily Addreſſes of Thanks to the King, for his General Eaſe by his Excellent Declaration are an undoubted Proof.

Thus then we ſee it is evident, that it is not only the Duty of all Parties, as they would be thought Chriſtians, to Repeal *Penal Laws* for Religion, but upon a fair enquiry, we ſee it is the avowed Principle of every Party at one time or other that Conſcience ought not to be compel'd, nor Religion impos'd upon worldly Penalties. And ſo I come to the third and laſt part of this Diſcourſe.

PART III.

It is the Intereſt of all Parties, and eſpecially the Church of England.

AS I take all Men to be unwillingly ſeparated from their Intereſts, and conſequently ought only to be ſought and diſcours'd in them, ſo it muſt be granted me on all hands, that Intereſts *change* as well as Times, and 'tis the Wiſdom of a Man to *obſerve* the Courſes, and *humour* the Motions of his Intereſt, as the beſt way to preſerve it. And leſt any ill-natur'd or miſtaken perſon ſhould call it temporizing, I make this early proviſion; That I mean no immoral or corrupt complyance: A *Temporizing*, deſervedly baſe with Men of Vertue, and which in all times, my Practice as well as Judgment hath ſhown the leaſt Averſion to. For upon the Principle I now go, and which I lay down, as common and granted in Reaſon and Fact with all Parties concern'd in this Diſcourſe, that Man does not change, that *morally* follows his Intereſt under all its Revolutions, becauſe to be true to his Intereſt is his firſt civil Principle. I premiſe this to introduce what I have to offer, with reſpect to the Intereſts to be now treated upon.

And firſt, I ſay, I take it to be the Intereſt of the Church of *England* to aboliſh the *Penal Laws, becauſe it never was her Intereſt to make them.* My Reaſons for that Opinion are theſe. Firſt, They have been an Argument to invalidate the Sufferings of the Reformers, becauſe if it be unlawful to diſobey Government about matters of Religion, they were in the wrong. And if they ſay, O but they were in Error that puniſh'd their Non-conformity; I anſwer, how can ſhe prove that ſhe is infallibly in the Right? And if this cannot be done, ſhe compels to an uncertainty upon the ſame terms. *Secondly*, She has overthrown the Principles upon which ſhe ſeparated from *Rome*. For if it be unlawful to plead Scripture and Conſcience to vindicate Diſſent from her Communion, it was unlawful for her upon the ſame Plea to diſſent from the Church of *Rome*, unleſs ſhe will ſay again, that ſhe was in the Right, but the other in the wrong, and ſhe knows this is no Anſwer, but a begging of the

Queſtion

Queſtion; for they that ſeparate from her, think themſelves as Serious, Devout, and as much in the Right as ſhe could do. If then *Conſcience* and *Scripture*, interpreted with the beſt *Light* ſhe had, were the ground of her Reformation, ſhe muſt allow the Liberty ſhe takes, *or ſhe eats her Words, and ſubverts her Foundation*; then which nothing can be more deſtructive to the Intereſt of any Being, Civil or Eccleſiaſtical. *Thirdly*, The *Penal Laws* have been the great *Make-bate* in the Kingdom from the beginning. For if I ſhould grant that ſhe had once been truly the Church of *England*, I mean, conſiſting of all the People of *England*. (which ſhe was not, for there were divers Parties diſſenting from the firſt of her Eſtabliſhment) yet ſince it afterwards appear'd ſhe was but one Party tho the biggeſt, ſhe ought not to have made her Power more National than her Faith, nor her Faith ſo by the Force of her Temporal Authority. 'Tis true, ſhe got the Magiſtrate of her ſide, but ſhe engaged him too far. For ſhe knew Chriſt did not leave *Cæſar Executor* to his laſt Will and Teſtament, and that that ſhould be the reaſon why ſhe did ſo, was none of the beſt *Ornaments* to her Reformation. That ſhe was but a Party, tho the biggeſt, by the Advantages that temporal Power brought her, I ſhall eaſily prove, but I will introduce it with a ſhort Account of our State Reformation here in *England*.

Henry the Eighth was a kind of *Hermophrodite* in Religion, or in the Language of the Times, a *Trimmer*; being a medly of Papiſt and Proteſtant, and that part he acted to the Life, or to the Death rather; Sacrificing on the ſame Day Men of both Religions, becauſe one was not Proteſtant enough, and t'other Papiſt enough for him. In this time were ſome *Anabaptiſts*, for the diſtinction of Church of *England* and *Calviniſt* was not then known.

Edward the Sixth ſucceeded, a Prince that promiſed Vertues, that might more than ballance the Exceſſes of his Father, and yet by *Arch-Biſhop Cranmer* was compelled to ſign a Warrant to Burn poor *Joan of Kent*, a famous Woman, but counted an Enthuſiaſt: But to prove what I ſaid of him, 'twas not without frequent Denials and Tears, and the Biſhop taking upon him to anſwer for it at Gods Judgment; of which I hope his Soul was diſcharged, tho his Body, by the ſame Law, ſuffered the ſame Puniſhment in the ſucceeding Reign. Thus even the *Proteſtants* begun with Blood for meer Religion, and taught the *Romaniſts*, in ſucceeding times, how to deal with them.

At this time the Controverſie grew warm between the Church of *England* and the *Calviniſts*, that were the Abler Preachers and Better Livers. The Biſhops being moſtly men of State, and ſome of them looking rather backward than forward, Witneſs the Difficulty the King had to get *Hooper* Conſecrated Biſhop, without Conformity to the reſerved Ceremonies.

Queen Mary came in, and ended the Quarrel at the Stake. Now *Ridly* and *Hooper* hug, and are the deareſt Brethren and beſt Friends in the World. *Hooper* keeps his Ground, and *Ridly* ſtoops with his Ceremonies to t'others further Reformation. But this Light and Union *ſlow'd* from their Perſecution: For thoſe abroad at *Frankford*, and other places were not upon ſo good Terms: Their Fewds grew ſo great that the one refuſed Communion with the other, many endeavours were uſed to quench the Fire, but they were ineffectual; at beſt it lay under the *Aſhes* of their Affliction for another time; for no ſooner was *Queen Elizabeth* upon her Throne then they returned, and their Difference with them. They managed it civilly for a while,

bu-

but Ambition in ſome, and Covetouſnes in others on the one hand, and Diſcretion giving way to Reſentment on the other, they firſt ply the *Queen* and her Miniſters, and when that ended in favour of the *Men of Ceremony*, the others arraigned them before the firſt Reformers abroad, at *Geneva*, *Bazil*, *Zurich*, &c. The leading Prelates by their Letters, as Doctor *Burnet* lately tells us, in his printed Relation of his Travels, clear themſelves to thoſe firſt Doctors of any ſuch imputation, and lay all upon the Queen, who for Reaſons of State would not be brought to ſo Inceremonious a way of Worſhip as that of the *Calviniſts*.

At this time there were *Papiſts*, *Proteſtants*, *Evangeliſts*, *Preciſians*, *Ubiquitiſts*, *Familiſts* or *Enthuſiaſts* and *Anabaptiſts* in *England*; when the very firſt Year of her Reign, a Law for *Uniformity in Worſhip and Diſcipline* was enacted, and more followed of the ſevereſt Nature, and ſometimes executed. Thus when we ſee that there never was ſuch a thing as a Church of *England* ſince the Days of *Popery*, that is, a Church of Communion containing all the People of the Kingdom, and ſo cannot be ſaid to be ſo much as a *Twin* of the Reformation; nevertheleſs ſhe got the Bleſſing of the Civil Magiſtrate. She made him great to be great by him: If She might be the *Church*, He ſhould be the *Head*. Much good may the *Bargain* do her. Now is the time for her to *ſtand* to her Principle. I never knew any body exceed their Bounds that were not *met with at laſt*. If we could eſcape Men, God we cannot, his Providence will overtake us, and find us out

By all this then it appearing, that the Church of *England* was not the Nation, the Caſe is plain that the *Penal Laws* were a *Make-bate*, for they Sacrificed every ſort of People whoſe Conſciences differed from the Church of *England*; which firſt put the *Romaniſt* upon flattering Prerogative, and courting its Shelter from the wrath of thoſe Laws. The Addreſs could not be unpleaſant to Princes; and we ſee it was not; for *King James*, that came in with Invectives againſt Popery, entring the Liſt with the Learned of that Church, and charging her with all the Marks the *Revelation* gives to that of *Antichriſt*, grew at laſt ſo tame and eaſie towards the *Romaniſts*, that our own Story tells us of the Fears of the Encreaſe of *Popery* in the latter Parliament of his Reign.

In *King Charles* the Firſt's time, no body can doubt of the Complaint, becauſe that was in great meaſure the driſt of every Parliament, and at laſt one Reaſon of the War. On the other hand the *Severity* of the Biſhops againſt Men of their own Principles, and in the main, of their own Communion, either becauſe they were more zealous in Preaching, more followed of the People, or could not wear ſome odd Garment, and leſs, lead the Dance on a Lords Day at a Maypole, (the Relique of *Flora* the *Roman* Strumpet) or perhaps for rubbing upon the Ambition, Covetouſneſs and Lazineſs of the Dignified, and Ignorance and Looſneſs of the ordinary Clergy of the Church (of which I could produce Five hundred groſs Inſtances). I ſay theſe things breed bad Blood, and in part gave beginnings to thoſe Animoſities, that at laſt broke forth, with ſome other Pretences into all thoſe National Troubles that agitated this poor Kingdom for Ten Years together, in which the Church of *England* became the greateſt Looſer. Her Clergy turn'd out, her Nobility and Gentry Sequeſtred, Decimated, Impriſoned, &c. And whatever ſhe is pleaſed to think, nothing is truer, then that her *Penal Laws*, and Conduct in the *Star-Chamber*, and *high Commiſſion Court* in matters of Religion, was her overthrow.

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'Tis as evident, the same Humour since the Restoration of the late King, has had almost the same Effect. For nothing was grown so little and contemptible as the Church of *England* in this Kingdom she now inttles her self the Church of: Witness the Elections of the last three Parliaments before this, I know it may be said the Persons chosen were Church-goers; I confess it, for the Law would have them so. But no body were more avers to the Politicks of the Clergy; insomuch that the Parson and the Parish almost every where divided upon the question of their Election. In truth, it has been the *Favour* and *Countenance* of the Crown, and not her intrinsick Interest or Value, that has kept her up to this Day; else her *Penal Laws*, the *Bulwork* of the Church of *England*, by the same figure, that she is one against Popery, had sunk her long since.

I hope I may, by this time conclude without offence, that the *Penal Laws* have been a *Make-bate* in the great Family of the Kingdom, setting the Father against his Children, and Brethren against Brethren; not only giving the Empire to one, but endeavouring to extinguish the rest, and that for this the Church of *England* has once paid a severe Reckoning. I apply it thus: Is it not her Interest to be careful she does it not a second time? she has a fair Opportunity to prevent it, and keep her self where she is, that is, the Publick *Religion* of the Country, with the real Maintenance of it; which is a plain preference to all the rest. If she hopes by her Aversion to a general Ease, to set up for a *Bulwork* against Popery, one Year will show the trick, and mightily deceive her, and the Opportunity will be lost, and another Bargain driven, I dare assure her, mightily to her Disadvantage. Violence and Tyranny are no natural Consequences of Popery, for then they would follow every where, and in all places and times a-like. But we see in twenty Governments in *Germany* there is none for Religion, nor was not for an Age in *France*, and in *Poland*, the Popish Cantons of *Switzerland*, *Venice*, *Lucca*, *Colonia*, &c. where that Religion is Dominant, the People enjoy their Ancient and Civil Rights a little more steadily than they have of late time done in some Protestant Countries nearer home, almost ever since the Reformation. Is this against Protestancy? No, but very much against Protestants, For had they been true to their Principles, we had been upon better Terms. So that the Reformation was not the Fault, but not keeping to it better than some have done; For whereas they were *Papists* that both obtain'd the *Great Charter* and *Charter of Forests*, and in the successive Reigns of the Kings of their Religion, Industriously laboured the Confirmation of them, as the great *Text* of their Liberties and Properties, by above thirty other Laws; we find almost an equal Number to Destroy them, and but one made in their Favour since the Reformation, and that shrowdly against the will of the high Churchmen too; I mean *the Petition of Right*, in the third Year of *Charles* the first. In short, They desire a legal Security with us, and we are afraid of it, least it should insecure us; when nothing can do it so certainly as their Insecurity, for Safety makes no Man Desparate. And he that seeks ease by Law, therefore does it, because he would not attempt it by Force. Are we afraid of their Power and yet provoke it? If this Jealousie and Aversion prevail, it may drive her to a Bargain with the Kingdom for such general Redemption of Property, as may dissolve our great Corporation of Conscience, and then she will think that half a Loaf had been better than no Bread, and that it had been more advisible to have parted with *Penal Laws*, that only serv'd to dress her in Satyr, then have lost all for keeping

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them; especially, when it was but parting with *Spurs*, *Claws* and *Bill* that made her look more like a *Vulture* than a *Dove*, and a *Lion* than a *Lamb*.

But I proceed to my next Reason, why it is her Interest to Repeal those *Penal Laws*, (though a greater cannot be advanced to Men than *self Preservation*) and that is, *That she else breaks with a King heartily inclin'd to preserve her by any way that is not Persecuting*, and whose Interest she once persu'd at all Adventures, when more than she sees was suggested to her by the Men of the Interest she opposed in favour of his Claim. What then has befallen her, that she changes the course she took with such resolutions of perseverance? for bringing him to the Crown with this Religion, could not be more her Duty to his Title, or her Interest to support her own, than it is still, to be fair with him. If she ow'd the one to him and to Christianity, she is not less indebted to her self the other. Does he seek to impose his own Religion upon her? By no means. There is no body would abhor the Attempt, or, at all Adventures, condemn it more than my self. What then is the matter? why he desires ease for his Religion, she does not think fit to consider him in this, (no not to the King she brought with this Objection to the Crown.) Certainly she is much in the wrong (and shews her self an ill Courtier, though it was become her calling) first to give him Roast-meat, then beat him with the Spit. Is not this to quit those high Principles of Loyalty and Christianity she valued her self once upon, and what she can, provoke the Mischiefs she fears? certainly this is dividing in Judgment from him that she has acknowledged to be her *Ecclesiastical Head*.

My fifth Reason is, that as the making and executing the *Penal Laws* for Religion affects all the several Parties of Protestant Dissenters as well as the Papists (the Judges in *Vaughan's* time, and he at the Head of them, giving it as their Opinion, they were equally exposed to those Laws) and that are thereby naturally driven into an Interest with them; so it is at this time greatly the Prudence of the Church of *England* to repeal them, for by so doing she divides the Interest that self Preservation allows all Men to persue, that are united by danger: And since she is assured the *Papists* shall not have the less Ease in this King's time than if the Laws were Repeal'd, and that her Fears are not of the succeeding Reigns, how is their Repeal a great Insecurity, especially, when by that, she draws into her Interest all the Protestant Dissenters, that are abundantly more considerable than the *Papists*, and that are as unwilling that Popery should be *National* as her self. For if this be not granted, see what Reputation follows to the Church of *England*. She tells the King she does not desire his Friends should be persecuted, yet the forbearance must not be by *Declaration* to save the Government, nor by *Law* to save her; and without one of these Warrants, every civil Magistrate and Officer in *England* is Perjured that suffers them in that Liberty against Law. How can she be sincerely willing that should be done, that she is not willing should be done *legally*.

But *Sixthly*. The Church of *England* does not know but they or some other Party may at one time or other prevail. It seems to me her Interest to set a good Example, and so to bespeak easie Terms for her self. I know of none intended, and believe no body but her self can place her so low, yet if it were her unhappiness, I think to have civil Property secur'd out of the Question of Religion, and Constraint upon Conscience prevented by a glorious *Magna Charta*

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for the liberty of it, were not a thing of ill consequence to her Interest. Let us but consider what other Princes did for their own Religion, within the last seven Reigns, when they came to the Crown, and we cannot think so soft and equal a thing as an impartial Liberty of Conscience, after all that has been said of a Popish Successor, an ordinary Character of a Prince, or a mean Assurance to us: This ought not to slip her Reflection. Besides there is some care due to Posterity: Tho the present Members of her Communion may escape the Temptation, their Children may not: They may *change* the Religion of their Education, and conscientiously chuse some other Communion. Would they submit the Fortunes they leave them to the Rape of hungry *Courtiers*, *Beggars and indigent Informers*, or have their poor Posterity *Impoverish'd*, *Banish'd or Executed* for Sober and Religious Dissent? God knows into whose hands these Laws at last may fall, what Mischief they may do, and to whom. Believe me, a King of the humor of Sir *J. K.* of the *West*, or Sir *W. A.* of *Reading*, or Sir *R. B.* or *S. S.* of *London*, would, with such vouchers, quickly make a *Golgatha* of of the Kingdom. If she thinks her self considerable in Number or Estate, she will have the more to lose. Let her not therefore establish that in the Prejudice of others, that may in the hands of others turn to her Prejudice.

Lastly. I would not have her miss the advantage that is designed her by those that perhaps she thinks worst of. I dare say no body would willingly see the *Presbyterian* in her *Chair*, and yet that may happen to be the consequence of her Tenaciousness in a little time. For if the Aversion her Sons promote by whole sale against *Popery* should prevail, the remains of it in her self are not like to escape that Reformation: I mean, her *Episcopal Government*, and the *Ceremonies* of her Worship, for which she has vext the most Conscious People of this Kingdom above an Age past. And the *Presbyterian* being a rich, industrious & numerous Party, as well among the Nobility and Gentry, as Trading and Country People, I cannot see but the next Motion, naturally speaking, is like to tend that way; for other Parties, however well esteemed, may seem too great a step of Reformation at once, and methinks she has tasted enough of that *Regimen*, to be once wise, and keep the *Ballance* in her own Hands. And certain it is, that nothing will so effectually do this as the entreated Liberty of Conscience; for then there will be four Parties of Dissenters besides her self, to *Ballance* against any Designs that may *warp* or *byass* things to their Advancement. And that which ought to induce the Church of *England* not a little to hasten, as well as do the thing, is this; she is now a sort of National Church by *Power*, she will then be the Publick Church by Concurrence of all Parties. Instead of Enemies to invade or undermine her, they that should do it are made the Friends of her Safety by the happiness they enjoy through her Complacency: And if any should be so unnatural or ungrateful to her, the Interest of the rest will oblige them to be her *Spies* and *Security* against the Ambition of any such Party. I do heartily pray to God that he would *enlighten the Eyes of her Leaders*, and give them good Hearts too, that *Faction* may not prevail against Charity, in the name of Religion: And above all, that she would not be proud of her Numbers, or stand off upon that Reflection; for that alone will quickly lessen them in a Nation loving Freedom as much as this we live in; And what appears in the Town is an ill Glass to take a prospect of the Country by: There are Parishes that have Fifteen Thousand Souls in them, and if Two come to Church it is matter of Brag, tho half the rest be sown among the several dissenting

Congregations of their Judgment. I would not have her miſtaken, though *Popery* be an Unpopular thing, 'tis as certain ſhe of a long time has not been Popular, and on that Principle never can be: And if ſhe ſhould Plow with that Heifer now, and gain a little by the Averſion to Popery; when it is diſcern'd that Popery does return to the civil Intereſt of the Kingdom they will quickly be Friends. For beſides that we are the eaſieſt and beſt natur'd People in the World to be appeas'd, there are thoſe charms in Liberty and Property to Engliſh Nature that no endeavours can reſiſt or diſappoint. And can we reaſonably think the Romaniſts will be wanting in that, when they ſee it is their own (and perhaps their only) Intereſt to do ſo? Theſe are the Arguments which, I confeſs, have prevailed with me to importune the Church of *England* to yield to the Repeal of all the Penal Statutes, and I ſhould be glad to ſee them either well refuted or ſubmitted to.

I ſhall now *Addreſs* my ſelf to thoſe of the *Roman Church*, and hope to make it appear it is their Intereſt to ſit down thankfully with the *Liberty of Conſcience* herein deſired, and that a *Toleration and no more*, is that which all *Romaniſts* ought to be ſatisfied with. My Reaſons are theſe. *Firſt*, The *Oppoſition* that Popery every where finds: For in nothing is the Kingdom ſo much of a mind as in this Averſion: 'Tis no news, and ſo may be the better ſaid and taken. I ſay then this *Unity*, this *Univerſality* and this *Viſibility* againſt Popery, make the attempt, for *more* than Liberty of Conſcience, too great and Dangerous. I believe there may be ſome poor *ſilly Biggots* that hope bigger, and talk further, but who can help that? there are weak people of all ſides, and they will be making a pudder: But what's the *Language of their true Intereſt*, the Infallible Guide of the wiſer Men? *Safety* certainly; and that in ſucceeding Reigns to chuſe: And if ſo, their Steps muſt be modeſt, for they are Watch'd and Number'd. And tho their Prudence ſhould ſubmit to their Zeal, both muſt yield to Neceſſity, whether they like it or no. What they convert upon the Square, *Perſwaſion* I mean, is their own, and much good may it do them. But the fear is not of this, and for compelling the avers *Genius* of the Kingdom, *they have not the means*, what ever they would do if they had them: Which is my ſecond Reaſon. I ſay *they have not the Power*, and that is what we apprehend moſt. There are three things that prove this in my Opinion. Firſt, *their want of Hands*, next, *want of Time*, and laſtly, *their Inteſtine Diviſion*; which, whatever we think, is not inconſiderable. They are *few*, we muſt all agree, to the Kingdom, upon the beſt Computation that could be made. Out of eight Millions of People, they are not *Thirty Thouſand*, and thoſe but thinly ſown up and down the Nation; by which it appears that the Diſproportion of the *natural* Strength is not leſs than Two hundred and ſeventy perſons to One. So that Popery in *England* is like a *Spirit without a Body*, or a General without an Army. It can hurt no more than Bullets without Powder, or a Sword and no Hand to uſe it. I dare ſay, there is not of that Communion, enough at once, to make all the Coal Fires in *London*, and yet we are apprehenſive they are able to conſume the whole Kingdom. I am ſtill more *afraid of her Fears* than of them; for tho they ſeem high, ſhe thinks their Religion in no Reign has appeared much lower.

O but they have the King of their Side, and he has the Executive Power in his Hands! True, and this I call the *Artificial* Strength of the Kingdom. But I ſay, firſt we have his Word to bind him. And tho ſome may think our Kings cannot be

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tyed by their People, certainly they may be tyed by themselves What if I don't look upon the Act of both Houses to oblige the King, his own Concession must; and that may be given in an Act of State. I take the King to be as well obliged in Honour and Conscience to what he promises his People in another Method, as if it had been by his Royal Assent in Parliament; for an honest mans Word is good every where, and why a Kings should not I can't tell. 'Tis true, the Place differs and the Voice comes with greater Solemnity, but why it should with greater Truth I know not. And if the *Church of England* will but be advised to give him the opportunity of keeping his repeated Word with her, and not deprive her self of that advantage by Jealousies and Distances that make her suspected, and may force him into another Conduct, I cannot help believing that the King will not to a tittle let her feel the assurance and benefit of his Promises.

But next, *we have his Age for our Security* which is the second Proof, of the second Reason, why the Papists should look no farther than a *Toleration*. This is the want of Time I mention'd. They have but *one Life in the Lease*, and 'tis out of their power to renew; and this Life has liv'd fast too, and is got within seven of threescore; a greater Age than most of his Ancestors ever attain'd. *Well, but he has an Army and many Officers of his own Religion.* And if it be so, what can it do? It may suppress an Insurrection, but upon the attempts we foolishly fear, they were hardly a Breakfast to the Quarters they live in. For if they were together, all the confines or remote parts of the Nation would Rise like Grass upon them, and if dispersed, to be sure they have not strength for such an Attempt.

But if they are not sufficient, there is a Potent Prince not far off can help the Design, who is not angry with Protestancy at home only. Suppose this, is there not as Potent *Naval* Powers to assist the Constitution of the Kingdom from such Invasions? yes, and Land ones too. And as the Protestant Governments have more Ships than the other, so an equal Land Force, when by such attempts to make Popery universal, they are awaken'd to the use of them: But certainly we must be very silly to think the King should suffer so great a shake to his own Interest as admitting an Army of Foreigners to enter his Kingdom on any pretence, must necessarily occasion. These *Bell-Beggars*, and *Raw-Heads*, and *Bloody-Bones*, are the Malice of some, and Weakness of others. But Time, that Informs Children, will tell the World the meaning of the Fright.

The third Proof of my second Reason, is *the Intestine Division among themselves.* That Division weakens a great Body, and renders a small one harmless, all will agree. Now that there is such a thing as Division among them is Town-talk. The *Seculars* and *Regulars* have ever been two Interests all the Roman Church over, and they are not only so here, but the *Regulars* differ among themselves. There is not a Coffee-House in Town that does not freely tell us that the *Jesuites* and *Benedictines* are at variance, that Count *Da D.* the Popes Nuncio and Bishop *Lyborn* Dissent mightily from the Politicks of the first; Nay t'other Day the Story was that they had prevail'd entirely over them. The Lords and Gentlemen of her Communion have as warmly contested about the lengths they ought to go, *Moderation* seems to be the conclusion. Together they are *little*, and can do little; and divided, they are Contemptible instead of Terrible.

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Lastly. The *Roman Church* ought to be discreet, and think of nothing further then the entreated general Ease, because it would be an extream that must beget another in the succeeding Reign. For as I can never think her so weak as well as base, that after all her Arguments for the *Jus Divinum* of Succession, she should, in the Face of the World, attempt to violate it in the wrong of One of another Perswasion, (for that were an eternal loss of her with Mankind.) So if she does not, and yet is Extravagant, she only rises higher to fall lower than all others in another Reign. This were provoking their own Ruin. And to say true, either way would, as the second Letter has it, discredit her for ever, and make true Prophets of those they had taken such pains to prove false Witnesses. And supposing her to reckon upon the just Succession, nothing can recommend her, or continue her Happiness in a Reign of another Judgment, but this Liberty equally maintained, that other Perswasions, more numerous, for that reason as well as for their own sakes, are obliged to insure her. Here the Foundation is broad and strong, and what is built upon it, has the looks of long Life. The Indenture will at least be, *quint-partite*, and Parties are not so mortal as Men. And as this joyns, so it preserves Interest intire, which amounts to a *Religious Amity* and a *Civil Unity* at the worst.

Upon the whole matter, I advise the Members of the *Roman Communion* in this Kingdom, to be moderate, 'tis their Duty, and it belongs to all Men to see it and feel it from them, and it behoves them mightily they would; for the first part of this Discourse belongs to their *Hopes*, as well as to the Church of *Englands Fears*, viz. the *Duty and Spirit of Christianity*. Next, let them do *good Offices* between the King and his excellent Children, for as that will be well taken by so affectionate a Father, so it gives the lie to their Enemies Suggestions, and recommends them to the Grace and Favour of the Successors. And having said this, I have said all that belongs to them in particular. There is left only my Address to the *Protestant Dissenters*, and a general Conclusion to finish this Discourse.

Your Case, that are called *Protestant Dissenters*, differs mightily from that of the *Church of England* and *Rome*. For the first have the *Laws* for her, the last the *Prince*. Those Laws are *against* you, and she is not willing they should be Repeal'd: The Prince offers to be kind to you if you please; Your Interest, in this Conjuncture, is the *Question*. I think none ought to be made, that it is the *Liberty of Conscience*, desired, because you have much more need of it, having neither Laws nor Prince of your side, nor a Successor of any of your Perswasions. The Fears of Popery I know reach you; but it is to be remembred also, that if the Laws are not Repeal'd, there wants no new ones to Destroy you, of the Papists making; so that every fear you are taught to have of their Repeal, is against your selves. Suppose your Apprehensions well grounded, you can but be Destroy'd; which is most comfortable for you to suffer by Law or without it? The Church of *England*, *by her Penal Laws, and the Doctrine of Headship*, has Armed that Religion (as it falls out) to Destroy you. Nay, has made it a Duty in the King to do it, from which (says she) nothing but an Act of Parliament can absolve him, and that she is not willing to allow. And is it not as reasonable that you should seek their Repeal, that if you suffer from the Papists, it may be without humane Law, as well as against Christs Law, as for the Church of *England* to keep them in force, because if she suffers, it shall be against the Laws made to uphold her? For not repealing them, brings

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you an inevitable mischief, and her, at most, but an uncertain safety; tho 'tis certain, she at the same time will Sacrifice you to it. And yet if I were in her case, it would please me better to remove Laws that might reproach me, and stop my Mouth when turn'd against me, and be content that if I Suffer for my Religion, it is against the Law of *God*, *Christianity* and the *Fundamentals* of the old and true Civil Government of my Country, before such Laws helpt to spoil it.

In short, you must either *go to Church*, or *Meet*, or *let fall your Worshipping of God* in the way you believe. If the first, you are *Hypocrites*, and give away the Cause, and reproach your dead Brethrens Sincerity, and gratifie the old accusation of *Schism*, *Ambition*, &c. and finally lose the Hope and Reward of all your Sufferings. If the second, *viz.* that you *Meet against Law*, you run into the Mouth of the Government, whose Teeth are to meet in you and Destroy you, *as by Law established*. If the last, you deny your Faith, over-throw your own Arguments, fall away from the Apostolical Doctrine of assembling together, and so must fall into the Hands of God, and under the troubles of your own Consciences and woundings of his Spirit, of which 'tis said, *who can bear them*. So that nothing is plainer then that *Protestant Dissenters* are not oblig'd to govern themselves after *such Church of England Measures*, supposing her Fears and Jealousies better Bottom'd then they are: For they are neither in this King's time in the same Condition, with her if the Penal Laws remain in force, nor like to be so, if she can help it, in the next Reign, if they are not Repeal'd in this; so that they are to be certainly Persecuted now, in hopes of an uncertain Liberty then. Uncertain both whether it will be in her Power, and whether she will do it if it be. The *Language* of *Fear* and *Assurance* are two things, *Affliction* promises what *Prosperity* rarely performs. Of this Promises made to induce the late Kings Restoration, and the cancelling of the former Declaration, and what followed upon both are a plain proof. And though the last *Westminster Parliament* enclin'd to it; no body so much oppos'd it as the *Clergy*, and the most Zealous Sons of that Church: And if they could or would not then see it to be reasonable, I can't see why one should trust to People so selfish and short-sighted. But if she will stoop to all those Dissenting Interests that are Protestant, it must either be by a *comprehension*, and then she must part with her *Bishops*, her *Common-Prayer*, her *Ceremonies*, and this it self is but *Presbyterian*; (and she must go lower yet, if she will comprehend the rest) or, if not, she must Persecute or give this *Liberty of Conscience* at last; which, that she will ever yeild to uncompel'd, and at a time too, when there is none to do it, while she refuses it under her present pressing Circumstances, I confess I cannot apprehend. But there is yet one Argument that can never fail to oblige your compliance with the General Ease entreated; *viz. That the Penal Laws are against our great Law of Property, and so void in themselves.* This has been the Language of every *Apology*, and that which, to say true, is not to be answer'd: How then can you decline to help their Repeal, that in *Conscience*, *Reason* and *Law* you think void in their own Nature?

Lastly, There is nothing that can put you in a Condition to help your selves, or the Church of *England* against the *Domination* of *Popery*, but that which she weakly thinks the way to hurt you both, *viz. The Repeal of the Penal Laws.* For as you are, you are *tyed* Hand and Foot, you are not your own men, you

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can neither ſerve her nor your ſelves, you are faſt in the Stocks of her Laws, and the courſe ſhe would have you take, is to turn *Martyrs* under them to ſupport them. If you like the *Bargain* you are the beſt natur'd People in the World, and ſomething more. And ſince Begging is in Faſhion, I ſhould deſire no other *Boon*; for upon ſo plain a loſs of your Wits, your Eſtates will of courſe fall a-ſtray to the Government, ſo that without the help of a Penal Law, you make an admirable Prize.

I have no mind to end ſo pleaſantly with you. I have a ſincere and Chriſtian regard to you and yours. *Be not Couzn'd, nor Captious, at this Juncture.* I know ſome of you are told, if you loſe this Liberty, *you introduce Idolatry*, and for Conſcience ſake you cannot do it. But that's a pure miſtake, and improv'd, I fear, by thoſe that know it is ſo, which makes it the worſe; for it is not Introducing Idolatry (taking for granted that Popery is ſo) but ſaving the People from being Deſtroy'd that profeſs that Religion. If *Chriſt*, and his *Apoſtles* had taken this courſe with the World, they muſt have *Killed* them inſtead of *Converting* them. 'Tis your miſtake to think the *Jewiſh* rigorous Conſtitution is adequate to the *Chriſtian* Diſpenſation; by no means: That one Conceit of *Judaiſing Chriſtianity* in our Politicks, has fill'd the World with Miſery, of which this poor Kingdom has had its ſhare. *Idolaters* are to be *Enlighten'd* and *Perſwaded*, as St. *Paul* did the *Athenians* and *Romans*, and not *knock on the Head*, which mends no body. And to ſay a Chriſtian Magiſtrate is to do that, that a Chriſtian can't do, is ridiculous; unleſs like the Biſhop of *Munſter*, who goes like a Biſhop one part of the Day, and a Souldier the other, he is to be *a Chriſtian in the Morning and a Magiſtrate in the Afternoon.* Beſides, 'tis one thing to enact a Religion National, and compel Obedience to it (which would make this Caſe abominable indeed) and another thing to take off unchriſtian Penalties for the ſake of ſuch miſtakes, ſince that is to give them Power to hurt others, and this only to ſave you from being hurt for meer Religion.

To conclude my Addreſs to you, of all People, it would look the moſt diſingenious in you, and give you an Air, the leaſt Senſible, Charitable and Chriſtian not to endeavour ſuch an Eaſe that have ſo much wanted it, and ſo often and ſo earneſtly preſſed it, even to Clamour. But that you ſhould do it for their Sakes who have uſed you ſo, and that the Inſtruments of their Cruelty, *the Penal Laws*, ſhould from a common Grievance become a Darling to any among you, will be ſuch a Reproach to your Underſtandings and Conſciences, that no Time or Argument can wipe off, and which I beſeech God and You to prevent.

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The Conclusion.

I Shall conclude with one Argument, that equally concerns you all, and that is this; you claim the Character of *English Men*. Now to be an *English Man*, in the sence of the Government, is to be a *Freeman*, whether *Lord*, or *Commoner*, to hold his Liberty and Possessions *by Laws of his own consenting unto*, and not to forfeit them upon Facts made Faults, by Humour, Faction or Partial Interest prevailing in the Governing part against the Constitution of the Kingdom; but for Faults only, that are such in the nature of civil Government; to wit, *Breaches of those Laws that are made by the whole, in pursuance of common Right, for the good of the whole.*

This regard must at no time be neglected, or violated towards any one interest; for the moment we concede to such a Breach upon our General Liberty, be it from an aversion we carry to the Principles of those we expose, or some little sinister and temporary Benefit of our own, we Sacrifice our selves in the prejudices we draw upon others, or suffer them to fall under; for our Interest in this respect is common. If then as *English Men*, we are as mutually interested in the inviolable conservation of each others Civil Rights, as men embark'd in the same Vessel are to save the Ship they are in for their own sakes, we ought to Watch, Serve and Secure the Interest of one another, because it is our own to do so; and not by any means endure that to be done to please some narrow regard of any one Party, *which may be drawn in Example at some other turn of Power to our own utter Ruin.*

Had this Honest, Just, Wise and English Consideration prevailed with our Ancestors of all Opinions from the days of *Richard the second*, there had been less *Blood*, *Imprisonment*, *Plunder*, *Beggary* for the Government of this Kingdom to answer for. Shall I speak within our own knowledge, and that without Offence, there has been Ruin'd, since the late Kings Restoration, above **Fifteen Thousand Families**, and more then **Five Thousand Persons** Dead under Bonds for matters of *meer Conscience* to God: But who hath laid it to Heart? It is high time now we should, especially when our King, with so much Grace and Goodness leads us the way.

I beseech you all, if you have any Reverence towards God, any Value for the Excellent Constitution of this Kingdom, any Tenderness for your Posterity, any Love for your Selves, you would embrace this happy Conjuncture, and persue a common Expedient; That since we cannot agree to meet in one Profession of Religion, we may entirely do it in this common civil Interest where we are all equally engaged; and therefore we ought for our own sakes to seek anothers Security, that if we cannot be the Better, we may not be the Worse, for our Perswasions, in things that bear no relation to them, and in which, it is impossible we should Suffer, and the Government escape, that is so much concern'd in the civil Support and Prosperity of every Party and Person that belongs to it.

Let us not therefore uphold *Penal Laws* againſt any of our Religious Perſwaſions, nor make *Teſts* out of each others Faiths, to exclude one another our civil Rights; for by the ſame Reaſon that denying *Tranſubſtantiation*, is made One to exclude a *Papiſt*, to own it, may be made one to exclude a *Church of England-man*, a *Presbyterian*, an *Independant*, a *Quaker*, and *Anabaptiſt*: For the Queſtion is not who is in the right in Opinion, but whether he is not in Practice *in the wrong*, that for ſuch an Opinion deprives his Neighbour of his common Right? Now 'tis certain there is not one of any *party*, that would willingly have a *Teſt* made out of his Belief, to abridge him of his native Privilege; and therefore neither the Opinion of *Tranſubſtantiation* in the Papiſts, *Epiſcopacy* in the Church of *England* Man, *Free-will* in the Arminian, *Predeſtination* in the Presbyterian, *particular Churches* in the Independant, *Dipping of adult people* in the Anabaptiſt, nor *not-ſwearing* in the Quaker, ought to be made a *Teſt* of, to deprive him of the Comforts of his Life, or render him incapable of the Service of his Country, to which by a natural Obligation he is indebted, and from which, no Opinion can diſcharge him, and for that Reaſon, much leſs ſhould any other Party think it fit, or in their power to exclude him.

And indeed it were ridiculous to talk of giving Liberty of Conſcience (which yet few have now the fore-head to oppoſe) and at the ſame time imagine thoſe *Teſts* that do exclude men that Service and Reward, ought to be continued: For though it does not immediately concern me, being neither *Officer* nor *Papiſt*, yet the Conſequence is general, and every party, even the Church of *England*, will find her ſelf concern'd upon reflection; For ſhe cannot aſſure her ſelf it may not come to be her turn.

But, Is it not an odd thing, that by leaving them on foot, every body ſhall have Liberty of Conſcience *but the Government*? for while a man is out of Office, he is *Teſt*-free, but the hour he is choſen to any ſtation, be it in the *Legiſlature* or *Adminiſtration*, he muſt *wiredraw* his Conſcience to hold it, or be excluded with the Brand of Diſſent: And can this be equal or wiſe? Is this the way to employ men for the good of the Publick, where *Opinion prevails above Virtue*, and *Abilities are ſubmitted to the humour of a Party*; ſurely none can think this a *Cure* for Diviſions, or that Animoſities are like to be prevented by the only ways in the World that beget and heighten them. Nor is it poſſible that the eaſe that ſhould be granted can continue long when the *Party* in whoſe favour they are not repeal'd, may thereby be enabled to turn the point of the Sword again upon Diſſenters.

I know *Holland* is given in Objection to this extent of freedom, where only *one Perſwaſion has the Government*, though the reſt their Liberty? But they don't conſider, firſt, *how much more* Holland *is under the power of Neceſſity than we are*. Next, *That our Conſtitutions differ greatly*. For the firſt, 'tis plain, in the little compaſs they live in; the uncertainty and precarioufneſs of the means of their ſubſiſtance: That as they are in more danger of Drowning, ſo neerer rain by any Commotion in the State, than other Countries are. *Trading* is their Support, *This*, keeps them buſie, *That*, makes them Rich; and *Wealth*, naturally gives them *caution* of the diſorders that may ſpoil them of it. This makes the governing Party wary how they uſe their Power, and the other Intereſts tender how they reſiſt it; for upon it, they have reaſon to fear a publick Deſolation; ſince *Holland* has not a natural and Domeſtick *Fund* to rely upon, or return to from ſuch National Diſorders.

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The next Consideration is as clear and cogent; our *Constitutions differ mightily*: For though they have the Name of a *Republick*, yet in their choice, in order to the Legislature they are much less than we are: And since the *Freeholders* of all Parties in *England* may Elect, which in *Holland* they can no more do than they can be chosen, there is good reason why all may be elected to to serve their King and Country here, that in *Holland* cannot be chosen or serve. And if our Power to chuse be larger than theirs in *Holland*, we are certainly then a freer People, and so ought not to be confin'd, as they are about what Person it is that must be chosen: Methinks it bears no proportion, and therefore the Instance and Objection are improper to our purpose.

But it is said by some, *That there cannot be two predominant Religions, and if the* Church of England *be not that*, Popery *by the Kings Favour is like to be so.* It is certain that *two predominant Religions*, would be two Uppermosts at once, which is nonsense every where: But as I cannot see what need there is for the Church of *England* to lose her Churches or Revenues, so while she has them, believe me, she is *Predominant* in the thing of the World that lies nearest her Guides. But if I were to speak my inclination, I cannot apprehend the necessity of any *Predominant* Religion, understanding the word, with *Penal Laws* in the tale of it: the Mischief of it, in a Country of so many powerful Interests as this, I can easily understand, having had the opportunity of seeing and feeling it too: And because nothing can keep up the Ball of Vengeance like such a *Predominant* Religion, and that *Penal Laws* and *Tests* are the means of the Domination, I, for that reason, think them fit to be Repeal'd, and let English Mankind say *AMEN.*

I do not love Quibling, but 'tis true, to a Lamentation, that there is little of the *Power of Religion* seen where there is such a predominant one, unless among those it Domineers over.

I conclude, they that are so *Predominant*, and they that seek to be so (be they who they will) move by the same Spirit and Principle, and however differing their Pretensions and Ends may be, the odds are very little to me, by which it is I must certainly be Oppress.

Dare we then *do* (for once) *as we would be done by*, and show the World, we are not Religious *without Justice*, nor Christians *without Charity*: That *False self* shall not govern us against *True self*; nor *opportunity* make us Thieves, to our Neighbours for Gods sake? the end of *Testing* and *Persecuting* under every Revolution of Government. If this we can find in our Hearts to do, and yet as Men, and as Christians, as English Men, we do but do our Duty, let the *Penal Laws* and *Tests* be Repeal'd; and in order to it, *Let us now take those measures of men and things*, that may give our Wishes and Endeavours the best success for the publick Good, that our *Posterity* may have more reason to bless our Memories for their *Freedom* and *Security*, than for their *Nature* and *Inheritance*.

FINIS.